

4-25-2013

# Chapman Percussion Ensemble

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# Chapman Percussion Ensemble

April 25, 2013

Nicholas Terry, Director



spring 2013

CHAPMAN  
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF PERFORMING ARTS

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# SPRING 2013 calendar highlights

## february

February 1

### University Singers Post-Tour Concert

Stephen Coker, Conductor

February 7

### President's Piano Series

Grace Fong & Louise Thomas, duo piano concert

February 14-16, 21-23

### *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare

Directed by Thomas Bradac

## march

March 7

### President's Piano Series

Sergei Babayan

March 8

### Chapman Chamber Orchestra & University Singers

Daniel Alfred Wachs, Music Director and Conductor

Stephen Coker, Conductor

March 14-16

### Concert Intime

Directed by Alicia Guy

## april

April 4

### President's Piano Series

John Perry

April 4-6, 11-13

### Stage Door

by George S. Kaufman & Edna Ferber

Directed by Nina LeNoir

April 19-21

### Opera Chapman presents

#### *The Merry Widow* by Franz Lehar

Peter Atherton, Artistic Director

Carol Neblett, Associate Director

April 24-27

### Student Produced One Acts

## may

May 8-11

### Spring Dance Concert

Directed by Jennifer Backhaus

May 11

### Sholund Scholarship Concert

Daniel Alfred Wachs, Conductor

# CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

*Hall-Musco*

*Conservatory of Music*

*presents the*

## Chapman Percussion Ensemble

Nick Terry, director

Christopher Bright

Christina Cheon

Jordan Curcuruto

Katie Eikam

Brietta Greger

Joy Liu

Nolan Petrehn



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or email [CoPA@chapman.edu](mailto:CoPA@chapman.edu)

April 25, 2013 ■ 8:00 P.M.

Salmon Recital Hall

# Program

Drums of Winter (1993)  
from Earth and the Great Weather

John Luther Adams  
(b. 1953)

Blanchard Canyon (1985)

John Bergamo  
(b. 1940)

Allegro molto capriccioso (1917)  
from String Quartet No. 2

Bela Bartok  
(1881 – 1945)

## -Intermission-

Disappearance (2010)

- Vanishing Point
- Evaporation
- A Face Lost in the Crowd
- Vanishings in the Night

Alexander Elliot Miller  
(b. 1982)

Mudra (1990)

Bob Becker  
(b. 1947)

Jordan Curcuruto, soloist

# Program Notes

Earth and the Great Weather is a 30-minute *tour de force* in three movements that uniquely combines the composer’s distilled impressions of traditional ritual drumming (Native American or Japanese Taiko), along with various polyrhythmic and metric operations, many of which, by and large, have become commonplace in modern classical music. In the first movement, ***Drums of Winter***, two primary compositional techniques are presented in stark contrast from one another: that of four drummers executing intricate groupings of shared rhythmic subdivisions, versus the same in juxtaposed subdivisions (including 3:5, 5:7, and 7:9). The sonic result for many will be a hard-driving sense of togetherness versus a mélange of rhythmical chaos. A solo tom tom player initiates each shared section, first with groupings of five notes, next with seven, and finally nine. Only in the last section do all four drummers arrive to an ecstatic unison. The score to Drums of Winter is prefaced with the following poetry, written by UvavnuK (an Iglulik Eskimo shaman), which helps us all to imagine a larger narrative from which the composer created this impassioned drumming.

*The great sea has set me adrift.  
It moves me like a weed  
in a great river.*

*Earth and the great weather move me,  
have carried me away  
and move my inward parts with joy.*

***Blanchard Canyon*** is located in the Angeles National Forest, north of the 210 Freeway at La Crescenta/Tujunga. Blanchard Canyon, the composition, is written for five amplified suspended cymbals, each to be played with a variety of implements, such as soft yarn mallets, hard cord-wrapped mallets, friction/superball sticks, barbeque skewers, small knitting-needles, double-bass bows, and human fingers. When skillfully executed and orchestrated among the five players, a rich variety of sounds can be produced. We do well to remember that the sound of a cymbal’s “crash” produces a non-periodic saturation of frequencies from 30 – 30,000 Hz, and depending on what strikes/activates the cymbal, particular frequencies can be reasonably isolated. Use of amplification allows us to hear these nuanced timbres, many which are scarcely audible. The music is best enjoyed as an immersion into an exotic sound-scape...perhaps on the basis of “pure sound”? Falling short of this, one could stay carefully attuned to a brief quote of Thelonius Monk’s classic melody *Round Midnight*.

# Program Notes

"*Disappearance*" is a percussion quartet in four movements. Each movement explores a different type of "disappearing": any sort of musical process that will gradually lead the music to terminate at a cadence. Each movement has a subtitle to illustrate its own process.

In "Vanishing Point," all four percussionists begin by playing a similar melody out of synchronization and at distantly independent points in time, but gradually come into synchronization, while becoming quieter and more distant.

"Evaporation" begins with ringing, resonant, bell-like sounds and gradually changes over the course of four minutes to non-resonant, staccato sounds, ending with a quiet, bone-dry muted marimba.

"A Face Lost in the Crowd" involves a conflict between one single pitched percussion instrument, the Glockenspiel, against a "crowd" of only non-pitched instruments or semi non-pitched bell-like instruments such as Singing Bowls and Brake Drums. The music begins with the solo Glockenspiel playing a recognizable melody (the "face"), which is gradually buried and imitated by the other instruments.

"Vanishings in the Night" contains the most abrupt of all the endings in the work, involving not a gradual process, but a sudden terminating effect. Played in the dark with stand lights, each musician, one at a time but at unpredictable moments, stops playing music and turns of his stand light, disappearing into the darkness.

(Alexander Elliott Miller)

"The musical language found in [my recent works] has been evolving in my music since as long ago as 1982 with Palta, a kind of concerto for the Indian tabla drums accompanied by traditional western percussion instruments. The approach became explicit in 1990 with the percussion quintet *Mudra*, where the idea was to extract a functional harmony from a purely melodic source: specific ragas of Hindustani classical music. (The term rag was once succinctly defined by the musicologist Harold S. Powers as 'a generalized scale, a particularized mode,' although Indian musicians usually give the word a more poetic meaning: 'that which colors the mind.')

Even though Indian music is generally characterized as being elaborately melodic with no harmony (by western European definitions) whatsoever, my personal experience has always been one of subliminally perceived harmonic movement, a sensation that is clearly related to my cultural background and musical training. This kind of cross-referencing is always experienced when one strong cultural expression encounters another and, in my opinion, this perceptual phenomenon will be the defining issue in all of the arts and politics of the 21st century. Musically, I have found this effect to be most pronounced in ragas which contain relatively few tones. The pentatonic modes containing no fifth scale degree (for example, the ragas Malkauns,

# Program Notes

Chandrakauns, and others) have, to my ear, the most ambiguous and intriguing harmonic implications. Rag Chandrakauns - traditionally linked to the full moon and late-night hours and with the scale degrees tonic, minor third, fourth, minor sixth, major seventh - has always attracted me. I have applied a variety of compositional and mathematical devices to these interval relationships to determine both the melodic and harmonic content of all of my music for the past twelve years. Most recently, I have used a matrix of four non-transposable nine-tone scales to derive the same interval relationships, resulting in a further expanded harmonic landscape. In 1971 the Montreal poet Louis Dudek wrote the following short but penetrating verse which seems to go to the heart of this method of working: 'We make our freedom in the laws we make,/And they contain us as the laws we break/Contained a remnant of an ancient music/That a new music in its laws contains.'"

(Bob Becker)

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## Artists

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Called "one of the most original musical thinkers of the new century" (Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*), **John Luther Adams** is a composer whose life and work are deeply rooted in the natural world. Adams composes for orchestra, chamber ensembles, percussion and electronic media, and his music is recorded on Cold Blue, New World, Mode, Cantaloupe, and New Albion. A recipient of the Heinz Award for his contributions to raising environmental awareness, Adams has also been honored with the Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University "for melding the physical and musical worlds into a unique artistic vision that transcends stylistic boundaries."

**John Bergamo** is a living legend of contemporary and non-Western percussion. He was born in New Jersey in 1940, and trained/worked with Max Roach, Gunther Schuller, George Russell, Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Lukas Foss, George Crumb, Sylvano Bussoiti, Mauricio Kagel, and Vinko Globokar. John moved to California in 1968, and directed the percussion program at the California Institute of the Arts from 1970 to his retirement in 2004. At this time, while extensively studying North and South Indian Classical Music, John performed with Frank Zappa, Nexus, Ali Akbar Khan, Lou Harrison, Mickey Hart, Emil Richards, L. Shankar, Glen Valez, Charles Wuorinen, Shakti, and Steve Gadd. In 2012, in recognition of his life's work, John was voted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame.

**Alexander Elliott Miller** is a composer, guitarist and educator currently residing in Southern California. His compositions have been performed by Grammy-nominated musicians including soprano Tony Arnold and the Los Angeles Percussion Quartet, as well as artists including Earplay New Chamber Music, TEMPO, Brave New Works, the Definiens Project, the Quintet Attacca, pianists Herb Bielawa and Vincent Craig and violist Dominic DeStefano.

Performances of his compositions have taken place at venues including New York City's Steinway Hall, San Francisco's ODC Theater, the Aspen Music Festival, Bowdoin Music Festival, NEON Festival and the Chamber Music Conference & Composer's Forum of the East. He has received awards and honors from the American Composers Forum and the MacDowell Colony, and was the winner of 2012 Earplay Donald Aird Memorial Composers Competition.

His work has also been performed by the What's Next? Ensemble, an LA-based new music group of which he is currently a co-director. In addition to other programming, since 2009, the What's Next? Ensemble has produced an annual concert series called the "Los Angeles Composers Project," a series that has featured performances of works by over 50 LA composers in its history.

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As a guitarist, Miller played electric guitar with the Long Beach Opera, the Color Field Ensemble and the What's Next? Ensemble, and has performed his own solo compositions for classical guitar at several new music concerts across the country, including venues in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Columbus, Philadelphia & San Francisco. He has also published a guitar quartet with an Italian publishing house specializing in contemporary works for guitar, VP Music Media.

A dedicated teacher, Miller is currently an Instructor of Music Theory & Composition at Chapman University in Orange, California. He previously served on the faculties of Illinois State University, the University of Southern California, West Chester University of Pennsylvania and California Lutheran University. He has worked with high school students, leading after-school music education programs in Los Angeles, and from 2005-2006, teaching guitar and coaching rock bands for Camp Ballibay, a performing arts summer camp in Pennsylvania.

Miller holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Composition from the University of Southern California, a Master of Music in Composition from the Eastman School of Music, and Bachelor of Music degrees in Composition & Guitar Performance from the University of Colorado at Boulder, with additional studies in Max/MSP at UC Berkeley's Center for New Music & Audio Technology (CNMAT).

His works are published by HoneyRock Percussion Performance Literature (Pennsylvania) and VP Music Media (Italy). For more information, please visit [www.alexanderemiller.com](http://www.alexanderemiller.com).

Born on June 22, 1947 in Allentown, Pennsylvania, **Bob Becker** holds the degrees Bachelor of Music with Distinction, and Master of Music (Performance and Literature) from the Eastman School of Music where he studied percussion with William G. Street and John H. Beck, and composition with Warren Benson and Aldo Provenzano. As an undergraduate he was also awarded the school's prestigious Performer's Certificate for his concerto performance with the Rochester Philharmonic. He later spent four years doing post-graduate study in the World Music program at Wesleyan University where he became intensely involved with the music cultures of North and South India, Africa and Indonesia. As a founding member of the percussion ensemble NEXUS, he has been involved with the collection and construction of a unique multi-cultural body of instruments as well as the development of an extensive and eclectic repertoire of chamber and concerto works for percussion.

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# Sholund Scholarship Concert

**Daniel Alfred Wachs, conductor**

**Program to include Dorman's *Spices, Perfumes, Toxins!*,  
Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 1, I. Vivace* &  
Mozart's *Requiem K. 626***



Chapman Auditorium, Memorial Hall  
May 11, 2013 at 4:00pm  
\$20 general admission; \$15 senior citizens, students and alumni  
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Poster designed by Gracie Wilson,  
BFA Graphic Design, '14

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Enjoy the performance, and I look forward to seeing you again throughout the season.

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